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Heussler Named To Vt. Council On World Affairs

World War II Bomber
Pilot Will Be
Assistant To Director

Brings To His Post
Background Of Travel

A mild-mannered World War II bomber pilot who once hired 600 camels to stage a salt caravan to Timbuktu has been named assistant director of the Vermont Council on World Affairs, according to UVM Prof. George T. Little, executive director of the Council.

Robert W. Heussler of Moscow, Vt., a Dartmouth graduate, was named assistant director of the Vermont Council on World Affairs effective July 1, and he brings to his new post a background of travel which has taken him around the world a couple of times over.

Heussler, who pronounces his name as though the "eu" were a long "i", began his travels like so many other young Americans, as a serviceman during World War II, flying a B-17 as a first lieutenant with the 8th Air Force in the European Theater. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Following his discharge in 1945, he returned to Dartmouth College to resume his studies in history and government, receiving the B.A. degree in 1948.

After his graduation, he traveled to China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines as a representative of the Standard-Vacuum Oil Co., and, while in China, studied Chinese language and culture at the College of Chinese Studies, also studying Chinese privately while working on petroleum supplies for General Chennault's "futile airlift into Manchuria just before the communists took all of North China in 1948.

Between 1949 and 1951, Heussler was at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton university, studying comparative government, American institutions and issues of public policy, international relations, international economics, and Far Eastern institutions. While at Princeton, he also studied the Russian language privately with a tutor and did specialized reading on the Soviet Union.

Following his Princeton studies, Heussler served for a time as an intelligence officer with the Central Intelligence Agency before joining the Cinerama Production Corporation in 1952 as Unit Manager of a world flight to shoot 3-D color film for a movie which was to star John Wayne and Terry Moore.

Heussler served as diplomatic representative for the world flight. "My job at the start involved making preliminary arrangements with the State Department in Washington and with the various ambassadors and air force attaches concerned," he explains. "Then, en

route, I made final arrangements with our embassies and with foreign ministries and air ministries."

During most of the trip, which was made by chartered ex-Air Force bomber, Heussler traveled with Lowell Thomas, jr., and his wife. Heussler and Lowell, jr., were roommates at Dartmouth, and served together in the Air Force. Young Thomas was advance man for Cinerama, of which his father was president.

In the course of their world flight, Heussler and the 3-D crew traveled to Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, the Caribbean, Argentina, French West Africa, Liberia, the Gold Coast, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Ruanda-Urundi, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Egypt, Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Britain, Greenland and Iceland.

Some of the subjects covered, described in Heussler's words, follow.

Venezuela — "Angel's Falls in the Orinoco Jungles — a ribbon thin cataract five times higher than Niagara pouring from a sheer face of cliff and disintegrating into mist over the dense jungle below."

Brazil — "Rio Harbor; low level sweep over the beach at Copacabana; head-on shot of the statue of Christ on the sugar loaf peak. Iguazu Falls on the Argentine border. These under-publicized falls rank just below the Victoria ones in Africa as the most beautiful I've seen."

Africa — "On the flight up the Congo right at water level, we were fortunate in finding a Belgian side-wheeler towing 13 barges. This

green hills on either side of the river, and the Ubange, a lesser stream, flowing in at the extreme right side of the 3-D spread. On the flight from Leopoldville to Stanleyville to Nairobi we hit a real bonanza while letting down over Lake Edward — a herd of over 200 elephants, hippos in a river bed, giraffes, rhinos, smaller animals — all roaming in herds, miles from any settlement. We got right down on the deck and ground the cameras till we ran out of film."

Greece — "The Greeks allowed us to photograph the Acropolis from low level, but insisted we stay 200 feet above the Parthenon itself."

Italy — "The Governor of the Vatican gave us permission to circle the Holy City at 500 feet above St. Peter's Dome; we were permitted by the Italian government to make a zero altitude sweep over Naples Harbor and over the lip of the crater top of Mt. Vesuvius."

France — "Paris. The whole city at 600 feet, keeping 100 feet away from the Eiffel Tower, the Normandy invasion beaches."

Germany — "Low level run down the 'Wagner' parts of the Rhine and over Cologne cathedral."

Switzerland — "Geneva, Lucerne, the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn."

Britain — "The RAF took no chances — they assigned a plane to keep right with us as we flew up the Thames. We had permission to shoot the whole metropolitan London area as well as the white cliffs around Dover, and the Canterbury Cathedral. We had to keep above 600 feet over Buckingham Palace (they were changing the guard just as we started filming)."

Greenland — "Flying in from Iceland on a clear day in July, we dropped down to water level as soon as the King Frederik VI Coast came into sight. Due to the warm weather the icebergs were not large, but we found some interesting shapes and color effects — one medium sized ice floe was particularly good; jagged and rather higher than the others, it had begun to melt in such a way as to leave arch ways in two sides of its water line area — we banked as low as possible to this floe and got an excellent picture of the arches, showing beautiful underwater color gradations extending from pastel blue just under the surface to deep blue and almost black farther down."

New York — "The day after landing at Idlewild we put the finishing touch on the trip by flying down the East River under its five principal bridges, banking between the tip of Manhattan and Governor's Island and then bussing the Statue of Liberty from three angles."

Heussler got involved with camel hiring when he went to Timbuktu as advance representative to survey the possibility of doing a camel caravan sequence. He flew into the Sahara regions of Mauritania. Thanks to a previous delay in schedule in Brazil when the Cin-

erama plane had engine trouble, Heussler arrived at Boutillimit after the season during which salt caravans operate.

So, he explains, "I wound up making arrangements to stage the caravan." This involved meetings with French officials who took Heussler to meet with native chieftans. "The native leaders were delighted to be able to find work for their people in the off season," Heussler relates, "because it raised their prestige with their people," and so the arrangements were completed.

Heussler hired 600 camels at 75 cents per camel per day and, three days later, the salt caravan was recorded on film.

The new assistant director for the Vermont Council on World Affairs also spent several weeks in British East Africa, "based most of that time in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi." In talks with officials of the local British administration, with armed forces leaders, native Kikuyu tribesmen, Indian residents and others regarding the Mau Mau insurrection, Heussler came to the general conclusion that the "situation is deteriorating," and he adds that many of the Britons he talked to privately admitted this.

The film shot on the 3-D tour is now in New York where so far as Heussler knows, nothing has as yet been done toward putting it together for release.

He states frankly that he regards his assignment with the Vermont Council on World Affairs as "much the most important," he has had, but adds that he considers himself fortunate in having had the chance to travel extensively in foreign countries.

His primary duties with the Council will be as a field representative to travel throughout the Green Mountain State to find out how the Vermont Council on World Affairs can help to promote international understanding.

A native of East Aurora, N. Y., Heussler is "fixing over" an old farm house in Moscow, Vt. He is single.

Both Heussler and Prof. Little, who was recently appointed executive director of the Council, stress that it is their aim to operate "through existing local agencies" rather than to try to "duplicate their efforts."

Right now, the Council, which is a strictly non-partisan, non-profit, service organization, is planning a series of fall community projects, outstanding of which will be observance of United Nations Day, Oct. 24.

The Council has recently been active in the Warren R. Austin Institute in World Understanding which was inaugurated at the University of Vermont this summer, and in sponsoring the International Amity Field Day at Middlebury which was attended by over 400 persons.

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The Council has just approved the first issue of its new newsletter, and the staff continues its regular work of getting together materials for international relations displays and exhibits and in bringing speakers to Vermont for interested groups at the community level.

The Council has its main office in Room 107 of the Old Mill on the UVM campus, and may be reached by phone, 2-9054 or 4-4511, ext. 310.